

By John Pendergast

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The Obama Administration's View: At a recent **U.S. Committee for International Religious Freedom, or USCIRF** , event, General Gration reported his satisfaction with the ruling NCP and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, or SPLM, hammering out an approach to North-South negotiations without the United States, and with the African Union High Level Implementation Panel, or AUHIP, and the United Nations taking the lead role as mediators. According to General Gration, the United States has been working hard on the key issues in the CPA, but that it was time for other international actors to take up the helm. He said he envisioned being called upon to assist occasionally, but that because the A.U./U.N. team has assumed leadership of the postreferendum negotiations, the United States would be allowed to concentrate on other issues of concern largely unrelated to these negotiations, such as food security and other functional support systems that would help "keep the place together." The United States has not deployed full-time, on-site personnel to become embedded in the A.U./U.N.-led process to deal with post-referendum issues, a process that is critical to ensuring a peaceful referendum and smooth implementation of the referendum's results. Vice President Biden's recent involvement is a promising development, hopefully presaging more senior administration involvement.